

VZCZCXRO4239

RR RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV RUEHSL RUEHSR
DE RUEHCH #0896/01 3241406
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 201406Z NOV 09
FM AMEMBASSY CHISINAU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8591
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CHISINAU 000896

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/UMB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/27/2019

TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM PINR KDEM MD

SUBJECT: ACTING PRESIDENT GHIMPU DISCUSSES RUSSIA,
TRANSNISTRIA, AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM WITH DAS
RUSSELL

Classified by: Ambassador Asif J. Chaudhry for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a November 19 meeting with DAS Dan Russell, Acting President (and Speaker of Parliament) Mihai Ghimpu criticized Russian actions in Transnistria and the Caucasus, made recommendations about the Moldova-NATO relationship and the five-plus-two, and described plans for a national referendum on a new constitution that would permit a simple-majority election of a President by Parliament. End Summary.

"Russia Wants Another Kaliningrad in Transnistria"

¶2. (C) Agreeing that good relations with all neighbors should replace the principle of spheres of influence, Ghimpu complained that Russia wanted "another Kaliningrad" in Transnistria, and had dodged its responsibility for solving the conflict by resorting to a "Talk to Smirnov" ploy. Beyond the issues of Russian troops stationed on Moldovan soil, he claimed, the Russians also helped maintain the destabilizing Transnistrian regime by ignoring its GazProm debts, and providing funds for the regime's debts, salaries, and pensions.

¶3. (C) Ghimpu put the issue in terms of Moldova's decades-long "suffering from Russia's interest": war, collectivization, deportations, and refusal to admit what actually happened in the 1940s. He said that the Russians had asked Moldova to sign a document at the CIS Summit praising the War to Defend the Motherland; Ghimpu said he refused: "Sorry. It was an occupation." Ghimpu also noted his displeasure with the Russian request to have a "First Ladies Concert" at the CIS Summit. Ghimpu said that he agreed at first, but then asked his wife not to participate: the Russians, he noted, had politicized the event by adding the first ladies of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Concluding his remarks on Russia, Ghimpu stated his hope that a new political class in Russia would give up on the imperial way of doing things, and rely on its economy and great culture to conquer through soft power.

Liberal Party Policy on five-plus-two and NATO

¶4. (C) In a break from the four-party Alliance for European Integration, Ghimpu noted that his Liberal Party supported the transformation of the Five-plus-Two into a "Seven," to give the U.S. more leverage, but had ceded the point in the

interests of Alliance unity. He also noted that the only solution to the Transnistrian conflict was to transform Moldova into a democratic and prosperous state so that those living on the left bank would be attracted back. Making a heavy-handed joke, Ghimpu declared that the other solution would be for Moldova to integrate into NATO, forcing the Russians to withdraw--"but only if we have your OK and the Liberal Party has a majority in Parliament."

Presidential Elections and Constitutional Reform

15. (C) Ghimpu noted that he understood the refusal of the Party of Communists (PCRM) to vote for a presidential candidate. "We didn't vote in June, so why should they?" Answering his own question, Ghimpu stated that matters were more urgent now. Declaring that he was unsure if any PCRM members would break away and provide the eight MP votes necessary to elect a President, he said that the government could put a new constitution forward for a popular referendum. The new constitution, which would need a simple-majority vote to pass, would provide for a simple-majority vote of MPs to elect a President, instead of the present three-fifths majority. He suggested a spring or summer 2010 date for the constitutional referendum.

16. (C) Ghimpu defended the proposed referendum by pointing out that the present impasse could occur

CHISINAU 00000896 002 OF 002

again, and that the problem therefore needed to be resolved. He stated that the setting up of the referendum depended on Alliance unity--and that, if some members disagreed, their disagreement would reveal that their motives for joining the Alliance had been dishonest.

CHAUDHRY